

MENTAL PORTRAITS OF REMEDIES FAMILIAR AND UNFAMILIAR

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To the honoured science of medicine, Homœopathy adds a special human artistry: the perception of who the human being to be healed really is and the recognition of his unique individuality in the roster of the proven instruments of healing. This similarity between patients and remedy follows the venerable law of correspondences, even the doctrine of signatures. The nature of substances must be apprehended intuitively by the use, not only of our six senses, but of other more delicate and deep accords with the human being. There is a special genius which can know human nature, which can enter into the unspoken, which can perceive the process behind the pathology, the functional disharmony which eventuates in organic illness. Medical students use acrostics, often ribald, to fix dull facts in their memory. The homœopath knows the remedy like the friend of his spirit.

What does *Fluoric acid* mean to you? An essential for proper teeth? A question of water supply? A substance which gives an El Greco-ish cast to your skin? A strange light on the avenue? Not so to the homœopath. To him it is a Casanova: A charming, fickle butterfly; the man about town who ogles women in the street; the "one-night stand" young man with a yen for variety and a great love of strangers. It is a remedy for males (or one for mannish women), debauches, always trying to prove their manhood through lecherousness and variety, who experience sudden aversion to wife and children which they fight against. Elated, buoyant, gay, as only *Phosphorus* or *Tuberculinum* can be, yet more vital than they. All their geese are swans. Compelled to move about energetically, to walk fast, fearless of misfortune, flickering like a fluorescent light. Hasty, craving cold and actually ill from warmth and warm drinks. Hungry to gluttony, relieved by discharges

which are thin, foul and acrid. Compulsion for long walks to let off steam. Their hair is bristly, tousled, dry; their nails have longitudinal furrows and both grow abnormally fast. Telangiectases, naevi, exostoses. Nails too thick, or thin and irregular; brilliant red of the palms of the hands.

What does the substance *Magnesium* mean to you? A ribbon to make a flash of light? A tooth-paste? Or cathartic? Actually it is light, fragile, brilliant, brittle, swift to be consumed, a flash in the pan. It cannot resist; it flames and peters out with a faintly sour, metallic odor. If *Sulphur* is the great unwashed, *Magnesia carbonica* is the great unloved, the illegitimate child, the droopy yet tense orphanage kid, anxious, silent, insecure, with twitching face and fingers and reproachful eyes. With sunken neck and temples, always nibbling for comfort, craving meat, a veritable Oliver Twist.* Marasmus, inanition, unwanted. *Magnesium* in the human body occurs pre-eminently in the sperm; in the vegetable kingdom, in seeds.

The child needing *Magnesium* lacks creativity. It has great trouble with wisdom teeth. Puny, sickly, sour babies who refuse milk, pitifully sensitive to noise and touch. Children of a tubercular background who are going into a decline. Spare, thin, dark, irritable, exhausted, unattractive children whom nobody loves.

Folk who need soothing and whose wisdom is acquired the hard way. Worn-out women who can't even keep house properly; restless, chilly, listless shadow-wives of exigent males.

Magnesia carbonica is to exhausted nerves what *China* is to loss of blood or fluid, a replenisher, a sustainer. Deficient vitality; too tired when sitting, relieved by walking and motion; sudden crumpling up without loss of consciousness. It is the chronic of *Chammomilla*. The thymus gland and the cerebrospinal fluid are rich in *Magnesium*. Magnesium deficiency causes lack of mother-love in animals. *Magnesium* is to chlorophyll as iron is to hemoglobin. A *Magnesium* defect in the diet is said to favor cancer.

Another defective vitality remedy, sometimes called the mineral opium, appears in molluscs. It is preternaturally calm especially in regard to death, which it loves. Speaks of death

with pleasure, though not suicidal; lies with eyes closed as if in coma and, when questioned, hesitates, repeats the question to gain time and finally slowly gives a rational answer. Brain fag, a "punch drunk", *Nux vomica*. Too weak to bring out an exanthematus rash. Effusion into the ventricles with rolling eyeballs and half-open eyes. Starting at noise, jerking in sleep, constant fidgeting the feet, feeling as if she had committed a crime, complaints from fright. Complete inability to sleep. Hangs the head down over the bed. Flushed with the least sip of wine. Energetic during menses. All this is *Zincum*, that sovereign remedy in post measles encephalitis.

Almost anyone with blond daughters will recognize the whimsical, changeable, weepy, flirtatious *Pulsatilla* with its late menses and corpus luteum deficiency, its religious streak in puberty, its jealousy and love of sympathy, its suggestibility, selfishness, self-pity and sanctimoniousness. Sullen, slow, sedentary, self-conscious, always wanting to make good impressions and to blame things on somebody else. Every big family of girls has one. The anemone (*Pulsatilla*) has been called the tears of Venus. It wilts easily, and blows in any wind Homosexual women, dreading men and averse to marriage, easily discouraged and touchy; unexpectedly stubborn; avaricious. Fears ghosts and the dark. Even the ovum is superficially implanted and doesn't take hold. Aborts easily and early (5th week).

Many a blond charmer, however, is of the type of *Cuprum*, the metal of Venus; the hysterical blonde who has never been crossed; a spoiled brat who needs a spanking and craves one. "Off the handle." Loquacious, sullen, headstrong, malicious, morose, with fixed ideas, terror of death, complaints from fright. Tricky and spoiled. Disorderly, changeable, dissatisfied. Maniacal rage; cramps of spirit as well as body. Wild-eyed; mad fits. They stage scenes; bellow like a calf; lie like one dead; blue and alarming and rigid. Ecstasy with quivering. Greed, malice, desire to injure, to run away and scream, to escape. Shrinks from people. Mimicry. Emotional nausea more than any remedy; nervous prostration in the young. Brain metastases; delirium with distorted face ending

in sweat. Chorea, convulsions, epilepsy worse before menses, worse at noon. Uremia.

Who does not know the dried-up old maid of Homœopathy? Spare, dry, dark, timorous, staggery, hopelessly depressed: Confused, cannot believe that she has said what she says. Does not think she is herself. Craving dried food, tea grounds, chalk. Fears insanity. Peevish and puckery. Illusions of being larger, numb, smooth, etc. Suicidal at the sight of a knife or blood. Uses up rolls of paper because of adhesive, soft stool, for which she must strain. Cannot speak for hoarseness. All the sap dried out of her. Do you recognize *Alumina*?

Every now and then a real neurotic will challenge you. Perhaps she came because she cannot meet any engagement, however pleasant, without diarrhoea. She will tell you that all her complaints are worse from mental exertion. There is a lack of balance between the mental and the physical; she is withered by intellect. She is full of whim and superstitions, such as never stepping on a crack in a sidewalk. She hurries, almost running, in the street because she thinks someone is following her; houses seem to crush her in the street. Time goes too slowly. She has strange impulses and notions and fears that she will fail at everything. She is the prize rationalizer. Her memory is one of her chief complaints. Predicts the time of death. Dreams of snakes and sex. Fears crowds.

She is an exhibitionist and will buck up if someone is keeping an eye on her. She is off balance and incoordinated. She makes errors in perception, especially of size. Enlarged sensation. She has fear of high places and is inclined to jump. Fear of fainting and disease. Indisposed to talk which makes her nervous. She goes on sweet binges which aggravate, and escapes to alcohol. She is a prize belcher and enjoys it. She wants the room icy and all her food cold and is aggravated from warmth in any form. Especially worse in the sun. She is a moon child. This is the actors' remedy, so full of hoarseness; painful throat, faltering speech from panic, failure and nerves; the "alibi Ike": *Argentum nitricum*.

"If I rest, I'll go mad" is the keynote to *Iodium*. Never

can stay in bed, even with 105° fever. Must have cold air, always much too hot. Compulsions to violence without cause. Wants to hurt her child. Dark, thin, tawny-skinned, shrivelled, withering; shuns company; melancholy, suspicious, suicidal. Always eating and never full, yet emaciates. The glands enlarge at the expense of the rest of the body. She burns the candle at both ends and is cross and anxious.

Among the bees the Queen is paramount, the drones and workers serve her. *Apis* is a jealous widow; deprived though not depraved; amorous, vain and hard to please. She is bossy and wants to run the world, a breaker of rules; absent minded, apathetic, awkward, drops things and breaks things (whereas *Natrum muriaticum* stumbles). There is a sting in her gossip; direct malice, not devious. She is impatient, dictatorial, whiny, fidgety; averse to constriction; upset by trifles; irked by small talk; procrastinating; worse after sleep and violently aggravated by anything hot.

If *Rhus toxicodendron* is the human barometer, *Mercurius* is the human thermometer, suited by neither heat nor cold, alternately hot and chilly. Many criminals need *Mercurius*. It may be a brutal, ugly, cruel type, the murderer's remedy. Suicide by shooting. Like the substance mercury, it is elusive. Like Mercury, the messenger of the gods, it is glib, tricky, mischievous, mistrustful. Weary of life. Hasty and ineffective. Quick-silver is called the chameleon mineral and is volatile. The typical *Mercurius* patient is chronically ill, disgusted and morose. He may be stupid and slow to answer, or over-bright without character. He is averse to company, timid, with feeble will and poor memory, worse from sunset to sunrise. He is bald and slimy; incoordinated, tremulous, irregular in his movements. He is embarrassed, homesick, absent minded, even imbecile. He has impulses he fears to follow. *Mercurius* acts on the lymphatic system as *Aconite* on the circulatory. In olden times mercurialization was almost universal, witness the slogan: "Salivation is salvation." Mankind has been thoroughly poisoned by this remedy.

What does the stately cedar make you think of? Villa d'Este? Moth protection? Indeed, the arbor vitae was the

secret of Egyptian embalming; dissolving tissue and flushing out the cavities. *Thuja occidentalis* is oval in its shape, in its buds, and those who need it are elliptical, all curves. It is the great-remedy for the Japanese people; for drinkers of tea, for those prone to excess. It is the former of tumors, lipomas, cysts, papillomas; warts, dark as the cypress and canalized. It has strange odours of fish-brine, of garlic, of honey. The *Thuja* patient has too much hair. Women with mustaches and coarse, black hair on the limbs. It is waxy and greasy-looking and pallid like the buds of the cedar. Extremely sensitive to people, to music which makes it weep. Worse in the moonlight; sensation of being separated from oneself, of floating; dreams of falling, the dead and levitation. Salacious; hasty, yet often slow in speech, mistakes in reading and writing. Fixed ideas; thinks she is pregnant, that the bones are brittle as glass, that that something is alive in the abdomen, that the legs are made of wood or elongated. Heavy trunk, short neck and thin limbs, small bones. Short children with irregular teeth which decay early. Pituitary dysfunction; mentally defective children, ugly looking people. Chronic ill effect of animal poisons such as snake bites, sera, and especially vaccinations which do not take. Feels he is under the dominion of a superior power, or as if a stranger were at his side. Exhausted and soft. Dissolves tumors. Excess of mucous discharges. The most vesicular remedy.

Such are the fascinating faces of some of our helpful remedies, but as La Fontaine said: "Gardez-vous de juger les gens sur la mien!" *Sulphur* may be clean, *Silica* angry, *Pulsatilla* thirsty and *Arsenicum* left-sided. Especially in acute diseases remember that your familiar types, such as the portraits I have been giving, are not the safe criterion. The physical generals are the best lifelines. Paradox is of the essence!

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